



Washington State Department of Early Learning

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Quarterly Meeting

September 14, 2009, 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE

Department of Early Learning (DEL) STAFF

Dr. Bette Hyde- Director

Sonali Patel Senior Policy Advisor; Presenting

Sangree Froelicher-Acting Assistant Director, Family Partnerships Division; Presenting

Joshua Verville, Southwest Service Area Manager, Presenting

Kelli Bohanon- Program Administrator, Head Start; DEL Staff to the Council

ELAC MEMBERS

Amber Havens - Educational Training Partners

Lorena Lowell- Child Care Center Director, ELAC Co-Chair

Jada Rupley - Associate Superintendent, ELAC Co-Chair

James Skucy - Executive Director, Benton Franklin Head Start

Nina Auerbach- Chief Executive Officer, Thrive by Five Washington

Leslie Goldstein- Executive Policy Advisor, Governor's Executive Policy Office

Paula Smith - Head of School, University Child Development School

Representative Roger Goodman - Washington State House of Representatives

Robin Higa- Parent

Maria Vera- Early Learning Consultant

Sue Winn- Family Child Care Provider

Mary Seaton- Director of Early Learning, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Ann Daley- Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating Board

Susan Dreyfus- Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services

Charles Earl- Director, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

Senator Curtis King - Washington State Senate

Todd McNerney- DEL Parent Advisory Group

ELAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Peter Berliner- PRI Makers Network Managing Director, Philanthropy NW- Thrive By Five Washington

Dr. Maxine Hayes - State Health Officer, Dept. of Health

Dr. Ilene Schwartz- Children with Disabilities- University of Washington

Representative Larry Haler - Washington State House of Representatives
Senator Claudia Kauffman - Washington State Senate
Marie Zackuse - Chairwoman, Tulalip Tribes of Washington

OVERALL PURPOSE

The purpose of the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) is for representatives from the state's early learning stakeholder communities to provide input and recommendations to the Department of Early Learning (DEL) so that DEL's strategies and actions are well-informed and are broadly supported by parents, early care providers, health/safety experts and interested parties. The Governor holds final authority for policy decisions and her P-20 Council will be made aware of ELAC's input to DEL.

TODAY'S INTENTIONS

- DEL staff to report out on progress of the Early Learning Plan (ELP) and the Professional Development Consortium (PDC).
- Hear public comment.
- Determine next steps.

WELCOME, OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S INTENTIONS, AGENDA REVIEW

Co-Chair Jada Rupley opened the meeting and reviewed the meeting purposes.

INTRODUCTIONS

Council members introduced themselves. Jada thanked Jim Skucy, Maria Vera, and Sue Winn for their commitment to another term as council members and welcomed new members Senator Curtis King and Todd McNerney.

OPENING REMARKS FROM DIRECTOR BETTE HYDE

Bette Hyde provided brief updates on some of the work of DEL:

- Introduced Deputy Director Bob Hamilton.
- Provided an update on the status of the Kindergarten Assessment process. Bob Hamilton is leading this effort. DEL is currently meeting with schools to get a sense of what they're currently doing and what they're concerned about.
- Provided an update on the Early Learning and Development Benchmarks. With all of the systems building work currently underway we need clarity about what we want for children and that's the Benchmarks. The Benchmarks are currently scheduled for review in 2010. DEL is currently working to design a survey concerning the Benchmarks which will be released widely in November.
- Gave an overview of the DEL presentation to the Quality Education Council on August 27, 2009 (see handout for details).
- Shared the joint DEL/Department of Health (DOH) letter concerning the H1N1 virus which will be distributed to child care centers. Bette emphasized the importance of parents having a child care back up plan to accommodate sick children.
 - Josh Verville identified DEL's role in dealing with H1N1 as focused around coordination and communication and emphasized looking to the Center for Disease Control and DOH for guidance.

- Sue Winn commented that providers are already noticing a difference in the way parents are handling child illness; the word is getting out.
- Bette mentioned at this time that she and Sonali Patel would have to leave the council meeting early in order to attend a hearing of the House Appropriations Committee regarding education budget cuts.

DEL REPORT OUT/UPDATES

Sonali Patel provided an overview of DEL presentations that will be made to the State Legislature in September and October of 2009 (see handout for details). Topics:

- Implementation of Early Learning Budget Reductions.
- Promoting Early Literacy & Early Learning Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- Update on efforts of Superintendent Dorn and Director Hyde to fulfill the request of the Governor when she vetoed the early learning provision in ESHB 2261.
- Background Checks.

Sonali also spoke about the ongoing question of when the Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) might move to DEL as topic for the coming year.

At this time Secretary Susan Dreyfus arrived and Bette took a moment to introduce her to the group and Susan introduced herself. Bette also took the opportunity to thank Mary Seaton for a very successful Starting Strong Conference in August.

Joshua Verville spoke about DEL's efforts to improve efficiency and data collection using mobile software in the field. DEL's pilot is largely based upon similar efforts in Indiana.

The group suspended conversation at this time to allow for brief audience introductions.

Kelli Bohanon provided an update regarding the State Advisory Council application.

- \$1.5 million available which can be used both for general operational costs of the council and projects such as the PDC, ELP, and other systems building activities.
- The application will be submitted sometime in the spring of 2010.
- If anyone has comments or would like to volunteer to participate in this process contact Kelli.

DEL REPORT OUT ON THE PROGRESS OF ELAC WORKGROUPS AND COUNCIL DISCUSSION

PDC-

Kelli gave a brief background of the ELAC workgroups and introduced Sally Holloway who is one of the chairs of the PDC.

Sally provided information about the purposes and progress of the PDC (see handout for details). She emphasized the need to make caring for young children a profession rather than an open entry occupation. The need is for a comprehensive system with multiple points of entry, articulation and clear career lattices. The NAEYC blueprint has formed the backbone for the work of this group. Council discussion:

- Representative Roger Goodman asked for examples of current system strengths and gaps. Sally responded by highlighting the abundance of community and technical colleges as well as several

public universities offering early childhood degree and certification programs as a strength. She mentioned the shortage of infant and toddler specialists as a gap.

- Senator Curtis King asked for more information about how this system interfaces with family friend and neighbor caregivers and situations in which language barriers are present. He also suggested the possibility of educational DVDs that could be shared with families. Sally spoke about the possibility of having drop-in support centers housed in public locations such as libraries.
 - Robin Higa commented on the importance of building the parent constituency and mentioned activities such as Play and Learn groups. Sally spoke about the need for the PDC to look at both sides; who is attending activities like play and learn as well as who is facilitating such groups. Need to prepare the experts.
- Lorena Lowell expressed concern about the lack of time and money for providers to participate in professional development as well as the need to find a way to count life experience.
- Sue Winn clarified that a large part of why the PDC is not talking more explicitly about family, friend, and neighbor care is because of what is laid out in the bill and that that side is being explored more closely within the ELP.
- Maria Vera spoke in favor of broad outreach to the public at large concerning infant/toddler brain development.
- Charles Earl asked about the level of student demand for early learning programs. Sally responded by explaining that the level of demand is not as high as would be ideal because there is no reward for providers. Charles commented on the difficulty for colleges to maintain these programs without demand in light of scarce resources.
 - Amber Havens spoke about there being high demand on the community-based training side but an inability to access funding because it is not credit-based. An audience member responded by explaining that community colleges recognize the gap and are working to address it.

ELP-

Kelli walked through the contents of the ELP packet (see handout for details) and introduced Sangree Froelicher and John Howell, explaining that Sangree would present information on the Drafting Team to respond to the Governor's letter and John would present information regarding the progress of the ELP Steering Committee.

John began by explaining that his presentation would be largely focused on process; how to align the two requests on the table. He also took a moment to mention the other members of the Cedar River Group working on this project; Garrison Kurtz, Kristin Wiggins, and Rhonda Peterson. He spoke about the Recommendations to the Governor as short term recommendations that must take place within the context of the larger ELP which is a long term view. He spoke about the vision statement as a working draft which can be revisited as the work progresses and asked that the Council share any comments they have on it. He emphasized the extraordinary amount of work involved in this process. (For details of John's update on the work of the ELP see power point).

Sangree provided background information regarding the Drafting Team which meets weekly and was developed jointly by Bette Hyde, Randy Dorn, and Nina Auerbach. The group currently has 25 members including the ELP Steering Committee workgroup chairs; a full membership list is included in the Process document included in the ELP packet. The purpose of the group is to draft a plan for recommendations to the Governor and a 2010 legislative proposal. The group includes 3 subgroups; finance policy, and indicators. Sangree emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement in the process; the DEL web

site includes a page devoted to ELP and Drafting Team updates and the OSPI and Thrive by Five web sites include links to drive people to this page. People also have the option of signing up to be “key communicators” and receive regular updates via e-mail. Bette, Randy, and Nina are also engaged in meetings with legislators. Sangree said that the group would have recommendations and content from the subgroups to share at the next council meeting. Council discussion:

- Susan Dreyfus spoke in reference to the vision statement saying that she wants DSHS to be responsive and is looking for guidance.
 - Jill Sells spoke about the connection to programs like Medicaid and ITEIP.
 - Elizabeth Bonbright Thompson spoke about accountability and the importance of data systems and the importance of linking the data systems of DEL and DSHS.
 - Nina Auerbach commented that the Drafting Team subgroups will be looking at how DEL interacts with other agencies.
 - Robin Higa expressed concern that DSHS was not at the table and wondered if they could be included in the group’s membership. Robin also commented that she would like to see the word community integrated into the guiding principles.
 - Tory Clarke Henderson commented on the need to consider the home environment as well as the system environment.
 - Susan spoke about the need to make an intentional connection to health care reform.
- Representative Roger Goodman spoke about the need to look at what is possible in the context of the legislative session timeline.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Gail Longo invited the outreach team to visit Montessori programs and look at what they’re doing.
- Katy Warren called attention to the WSA Subsidy Survey report. WSA wanted to share the results of this informal survey concerning provider’s perspective on the subsidy system. Contact Katy with questions.
- Elizabeth Bonbright Thompson spoke about the success of CCR&R funded cohorts for CDA classes and about the need for more funding from the state to increase these programs.
- Steve Olsen spoke about county early learning coalitions and the potential of using these coalitions as a way to reach the community base.
- Hannah Lidman spoke about the need to consider provider compensation as a bottom line issue as this work moves forward. She spoke about the Career and Wage Ladder program as an example of increased quality occurring in conjunction with increased compensation.

Meeting Adjourned.